Alberta Finance
Economic Bulletin

Economic Statistics Released During the Week of April 21, 2003 to April 25, 2003

	Reference Period	Month/Previous Month (m/m)	Month/Previous Year's Month (y/y)	Comments
Retail sales ($ millions)	February			Canadian retail sales rose by 1.5% in February, to $26.5 billion. The monthly increase was concentrated in the automotive sector, where sales were up 3.9% from January. Clothing (-2.0%) and furniture (-0.7) sales declined, while other retail sectors were virtually unchanged. Alberta 's monthly retail sales growth of 2.5% led all provinces, followed by Saskatchewan (+1.8%), New Brunswick (+1.7%) and Prince Edward Island (+1.7%). All ten provinces recorded increased retail sales in February.
Alberta	3,286	2.5%	6.9%	
Canada	26,480	1.5%	5.6%	
Wholesale Trade ($ millions)	February			Alberta's wholesale trade increased by 0.7% in February, and was up 9.9% from the same period last year. Across Canada, wholesale trade was down 0.2% on a monthly basis, but 8.5% above its level of February 2002. Nationally, 6 of 11 trade groups fell in February, with beverage, drug and tobacco products (-2.2%), apparel and dry goods (-7.7%) and metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment (-2.1%) contributing most to the monthly decline. The decline in these sectors was partly offset by increased sales in computers, software and other electronic equipment (up 2.9%).
Alberta	3,778	0.7%	9.9%	
Canada	36,787	-0.2%	8.5%	
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	March			Canada's annual inflation rate slowed to 4.3% in March, down from 4.6% the previous month. The slowdown was attributable mainly to a smaller annual increase in gasoline prices. Alberta's yearly CPI inflation rate of 7.6% was due in large measure to the effects of company natural gas rebates introduced in March 2002, which artificially lowered the natural gas component of the Alberta CPI last year.
Alberta	130.2	0.9%	7.6%	
Canada	122.8	0.4%	4.3%	